Jourdan Schied

English W-400

Professor Fox

Multi-genre Project

To: [kgallagher@yahoo.com](mailto:kgallagher@yahoo.com)

Subject: A quick thank you for *Teaching for Adolescents*

Mr. Gallagher,

I am a young student simply writing to thank you for the ideas and wisdom presented throughout *Teaching for Adolescents*. Going into my first year as a teacher of writing, I became much less nervous after knowing I had this resource on my bookshelf. I specifically found the section on “writing reasons” to be very helpful. One of my main interests is keeping my students inspired; I was not 100% confident I possess the tools to do so, however, and this new resource builds my confidence. The reasons you list range from practical to philosophical, but they include something for each student.

Thank you once again for taking the time to write such a helpful resource for new and veteran teachers. You have helped keep me inspired and motivated.

Sincerely,

Jourdan Schied

What inspires me? How do I want to teach? What should I remember when teaching?

You believe teaching and education are the best ways to prevent and fight oppression. By developing your students’ minds, you’re teaching them about human rights, respect, integrity, and empowerment.

If I can help my students love to read and write, education will become easier for them. Students who don’t mind reading are more likely to participate in higher education; students who participate in higher education are more likely to live outside of poverty and lead productive lives.

You want to help make the world a better place. A better place needs better people.

Creativity is an outlet. Reading and writing can be incorporated into every person’s life as a way to relieve stress and make life more enjoyable.

You want your students to feel comfortable coming to you with help – in school and in life. You want to be relatable and human in front of your students. You will always treat them with great respect and admiration.

Patience truly is a virtue. Every day will not be full of wonder and inspiration. Some days will be complicated, challenging, and downright frustrating. Other days will be exactly as fabulous and wonderful as you hoped they would be, though. Hold out for those awesome days.

You hope to open your students’ eyes to the world around them. Some students may never get the chance to travel, but that doesn’t mean they can’t learn about other places, people, and cultures. Continue to use travel and exploration as a means of inspiration for yourself and your students.

**Starting Your Personal Manifesto**

Category: Free writing

Grade Level: 6-12

Day of Implementation: Oct. 17, 2011

Estimated Time: 50-65 min

1. Objectives:

* Introduce students to the concept and objective of a manifesto
* Encourage free-thinking and free-writing before organized writing begins
* Emphasize the importance and helpfulness of using an organized method of pre-writing

2. Materials:

* PowerPoint
* Enough newspaper articles for the class
* Paper and pen

3. Procedures:

* Manifesto Power point

-explains goal of manifesto

-explains (in general terms) how to go about writing a manifesto

* Pass out newspaper articles

-explain overall assignment

-explain the day’s activity

* Students choose article they like best

-10-15 minutes for reading and free write

\*\*make sure students know writing is only for them, can be about whatever the article makes them think, can be written in any form

* Mini “pre-writing lesson”

-ask class to generate ideas for ORGANIZED pre-writing

-show blank templates/discuss how to use them (templates can be found as a PDF attachment)

web/cluster

flow chart

describing wheel

outline

* Form groups according to article chosen

-each group should form a written pre-write

-one person from each group writes the group’s pre-writing and presents it to the class

\*\*only criteria is that the group’s thoughts must be organized and clear

* Ask class if they have any questions

WARNING: CREATIVITY IS ENCOURAGED HERE

Please leave your boxes at home, as confinement is frowned upon.

Top ten things you never want a student to say in your classroom:

1. “Ahh, I’m ready for a good snooze!”
2. “Damn, she looks fine in those pants.”
3. “I snuck some vodka in my water bottle, heeey!”
4. “MY THROAT IS BLEEDING!”
5. “Well, sparknotes says…”
6. “I don’t know how I got an A, I wrote that right before class.”
7. “I was watching Jersey Shore last night and the most profound thing happened…”
8. “Excuse me, Miss Schied, my water just broke.”
9. “I love writing five paragraph essays!”
10. “I don’t understand the difference between t-h-e-i-r, t-h-e-y-‘-r-e, and t-h-e-r-e.”

When Cassie was young she quickly learned that spelling was not a talent that came to her naturally. She says she developed a phobia of spelling because of her lack of ability. She is not sure why no one spent more time working with her on spelling, but she overcame the struggle eventually. When Cassie was in third grade she began journaling. This became an empowering experience for her because she began to write only for herself. No one was going to read what she wrote in her journal, so she no longer needed to feel insecure about her spelling.

While Cassie was in third grade she also had an excellent teacher that made her more confident in her ability to spell. This particular teacher encouraged her students to correct any mistakes they saw written on the chalk board. By the end of the school year Cassie felt confident enough in her abilities to raise her hand and correct her teacher’s mistakes. Unfortunately, though, when Cassie got to fourth grade her new teacher did not feel the same way. Instead, Cassie was ridiculed for trying to correct the teacher, and her confidence dwindled slightly.

Once Cassie got to high school she began learning more about the art of writing. During her junior year she developed a sincere love of reading. This love of reading helped inspire Cassie to become a better writer. During her senior year of high school, Cassie had a difficult teacher that helped improve her skills. The teacher was strict, yet encouraging. Cassie was determined to become a better writer, no matter what career she would decide to pursue.

Once Cassie came to IUPUI, she found a new love for writing. She has loved literature for a long time, but she has a newfound appreciation for writing now as well. She recently started free-writing for herself, which consequently makes her feel like a “real writer.” Becoming a better writer has made Cassie a better communicator in all aspects of her life. She also helps her siblings with their writing now. They often ask her to help revise and edit their papers for school.

Most of the writing Cassie does currently is academic-based. She has very little time to do any other types of writing. As mentioned before, she occasionally finds time to write for herself, though. She also writes messages on Facebook and via e-mail to keep in touch with friends, especially her friend Daphne who lives abroad. Cassie makes time to write when she wants to work things out within her own mind too. She finds that writing things out helps her straighten things out in her mind as well.

Cassie writes three to four times in a typical day. She tends to have a short attention span, so it helps if she walks away from her writing and approaches it again later in the day. If she tries to sit down and write for a long period of time, she finds that it lead to un-inspired writing that she will have to re-write again later anyway. Cassie also uses her phone throughout the day to write things down if she has an idea that she does not want to forget.

When Cassie begins working on a new piece of writing she begins by talking to the people in her life about the topic. She likes to know what other people think about the topic before she starts writing. She does her best never to “pigeon-hole” herself as she is writing. Instead, she likes to let the ideas flow and allow herself plenty of time to edit and re-write as need-be. She never sees a piece of writing as being completely finished. Instead, she looks at the writing process as an on-going venture that can always be re-visited.

Cassie’s ideal way of writing is in small spurts, but the ideal way is not always realistic. When Cassie has to sit down and write for long periods of time, she likes to go to Starbucks or a similar environment where there is soft music playing and customers coming and going. She says the small noises and directions help her be “just distracted enough.” This past summer Cassie found that speaking her thoughts and having someone else record them on a computer was also an exciting way to “write.” She enjoyed being able to walk around and have her hands free to drink wine and smoke a cigarette while her friend recorded her thoughts. She would later go back herself and edit the paper, of course.

The main thing Cassie worries about while she is writing is staying true to herself. She is always aware that when writing for academic purposes, she is ultimately writing for a professor. Despite that, though, she always wants to stay true to herself and her own ideas. The thing that hinders Cassie’s writing the most is when her professor does not welcome new viewpoints. She enjoys being in an environment where intelligent and educated ideas of all kinds are encouraged and welcomed. Writing is most exciting for Cassie when she feels that “light bulb” come one, or when she comes up with a new idea that she feels is interesting. Writing is the most frustrating for Cassie when she thinks she has a good idea, but she has trouble getting it down on paper. Sometimes the most frustrating thing for a writer is to justify or support their ideas in a way that will make sense to the reader.

Cassie has gone from a timid writer who was a poor speller to a confident writer who thoroughly enjoys the process. Overall, though, Cassie loves writing because it helps her understand the world around her. She feels as if through writing she comes to understand the ways she thinks and the way she communicates better, which in turn helps her understand others better. Cassie greatly appreciates writing because it helps people connect with one another.

**Lesson re-affirmed:**

**Writing is a PROCESS. Our writing approaches, styles, strengths, and weaknesses are constantly evolving. This is true (and will always be true) for students, teachers, and professionals.**

It seemed that throughout the process, my classmates had many questions regarding the term “manifesto.” Perhaps it would have been helpful if we had more clearly stated that a manifesto was different than the normal structured writing we are used to doing in the classroom setting. Our group felt we did an adequate job explaining the goal of a manifesto, but after hearing the responses, perhaps we did not. It was good for me to learn the lesson that just because I think something is simple and stated clearly, that may not be the case. I need to consider all the possibilities in regards to my class’ level of understanding.

The class responded well to most of the activities, however. I learned that having a set game plan before class is extremely important. It is always possible to adjust as the class goes on, but students enjoy being engaged via activities, so it is helpful to plan ahead. While collaborating on the lesson plan I also became excited. I was passionate about the project at hand and I had a good time formulating a “plan of attack.”

**Lesson Learned:**

**Sometimes the most challenging part of an assignment is to get students to think outside the box! Writers are so used to following rules and templates, sometimes it’s difficult for them to know what to do with freedom. Challenge students to embrace freedom, creativity, and new things.**

Sally (317.918.1246): So I was thinking 2day, my students r more like gnomes than nything else. They r all different, unique, special…but I’m happy to have them all in my garden (classroom) hanging out w/ me!

Julie(317.967.5990): I’m happy 2 have teacher friends and I understand your analogy…but I have to say, you’re quite strange.

Works Cited

Houghton Mifflin Harcourt. “Graphic Organizers.” http://www.eduplace.com/graphicorganizer/

Gallagher, Kelly. *Teaching Adolescent Writers.* Stenhouse Publishers. 2006.